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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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4 October 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Special Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

SUBJECT : Section V Input Suggestions

1. Attached per your request is a set of action suggestions that could be considered for inclusion in a "Section V" of the final version of the pressure program paper. Since the Director and I (plus my secretary who typed this material) are the only ones in the Agency aware of this project, these suggestions are perforce personal and not institutional. They draw on thoughts or ideas of my colleagues that I was already aware of, but (obviously) have not been coordinated with anyone.

2. With this set of draft suggestions (many of which -- again as requested -- stray far outside of my assigned parish) I am simultaneously forwarding a study on possible urban targets. A separate paper on internal South Vietnamese political action is now being typed and will be sent down as soon as it is finished. If you so desire, I can send a more detailed version of the [redacted] proposal, including a specimen sample for your inspection.

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George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

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Attachments

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DRAFT OUTLINE

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Input Suggestions for Possible Inclusion in Section V

Set forth below in rough outline form are action ideas and suggestions offered for consideration and possible inclusion in the final version of the pressure package memorandum's Section V. These should, of course, be melded with suggestions received from other Government components -- particularly the JCS, whose list of proposed actions by air, sea and land forces will doubtless be much more comprehensive and detailed.

I. AIR ACTIONS

A. For general targeting suggestions, see our 22 September memorandum to General Haig (entitled "Targeting Suggestions") and its accompanying attachment.

B. For a list of possible impact targets in urban areas, see the 2 October memorandum to Dr. Kissinger on "Key Facilities in the Hanoi Area." Any final selection of urban area targets should bear in mind that the object of hitting such targets is not, repeat not, terrorism. Instead, the object is to make the DRV regime look impotent and make it lose face in the eyes of its own people by (1) shutting down virtually all electric power (i.e., turning off the lights), (2) silencing its propaganda voice, and (3) knocking out the key Party and government buildings -- not to put out of commission the functions normally carried out in those buildings (any success in this sphere would be a fringe benefit) but for symbolic impact, letting the buildings' ruined hulks stand as mute, unconcealable symbols of U.S. power and DRV impotence.

C. For several cogent reasons -- including that of aiding the psychological warfare/covert action suggestions given below -- it would be useful to mount laser bomb air strikes against at least the following seven targets in the communications field:

1. Hanoi AM transmitter and antenna site at Mc Tri

This is Hanoi's principal domestic and international

voice transmitting facility. It is the voice of Radio Hanoi, Radio Liberation, the Pathet Lao, the "Patriotic Neutralist Forces" and the voice of Sihanouk. It also broadcasts clandestine transmissions. It is connected by cable to the Dai Mo transmitter.

2. Hanoi International Radio Communications Receiver,
Son Dong

Largest and best equipped radio receiving station in North Vietnam. It is believed to be used jointly by Ministry of Defense and other departments of the government.

3. Hanoi Radio Communications Transmitter Number 2
Part of military communications network -- long range.

4. Hanoi Radio Communications Receiver Number 3,
Phu Coc

Believed to be primarily direction-finding. Probably receives DF data from outstations monitoring allied ELINT and communications signals. Could also be used as commo terminal on military networks. Can serve all of Indochina.

5. Hanoi Radio Communications Station Number 11,
Bac Mai

Station has 600 N.M. range and serves China, Laos, and Cambodia. May also be part of air defense system.

6. Lang Truoc Radio Communications Transmitter

Part of military communications system -- long range

7. Hanoi International Radio Communications Transmitter,
Dai Mo

Largest radio transmission station in NVN. Linked to

Me Tri facility by landline. Functions as both domestic and international station. Major base for Communist Bloc and international station. Major base for Communist Bloc international defense communications.

D. For psychological impact reasons, one target that should be knocked out is the Hanoi Thermal Power Plant. Current reporting [REDACTED] 25X1 2 October 1972) indicates that the power supply in Hanoi is already erratic, with light bulbs burning very dimly and electrical appliances being susceptible to damage because of current drops and surges. Knocking out this plant might go an appreciable further way toward turning off most of Hanoi's lights -- a fact the regime could not hide and which would constitute a graphic reminder of its weakness every evening.

E. If the level of Communist main force pressure begins to taper off in South Vietnam (as will probably happen whatever be Hanoi's medium to long term military, political or diplomatic intentions), the allied air assets thus "freed" should not all be devoted to [REDACTED] Some should be dedicated to harassing the Ho Chi Minh trail and crimping the "logistics offensive" the Communists seem on the verge of initiating. Other assets should be earmarked for providing requisite air support to friendly forces in (particularly) Laos and (where necessary) Cambodia. The trick here is to avoid a false concept of priorities yielding apparent conflicts which are in fact not real. Any debate over whether support of, say, Vang Pao's forces is "more or less important" than vigorously pursuing [REDACTED] is a bootless debate on a non-issue. The object of the exercise is to maximize the totality of pressures on the Lao Dong Politburo -- not to hit particular targets. In order to maximize these pressures we need to pre-empt (if possible) any Communist chance of scoring politically useful military successes in Laos and Cambodia, at least during the next several months.

F. On the asset allocation issue, there also needs to be created (by Presidential order if necessary) a dedicated pool of resources (e.g., five or six

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C-130s)

Maximizing political pressure on the Politburo,

the primary object of this whole program, requires dropping both -- of the right kind, in the right quantity on the right places at the right time.

G. To the extent the changing military situation on the ground in South Vietnam so permits, a progressively increasing share of providing support to South Vietnamese forces should be turned over to the VNAF, with the U.S. progressively concentrating on hitting the North, harassing the Ho Chi Minh trail area and supporting friendly forces in Laos and Cambodia..

H. Any shifts in actual responsibility allocations should be highlighted by our overall information and propaganda posture. In official military briefings, public pronouncements and the whole panoply of [redacted] propaganda activities, the U.S. air role in South Vietnam should be deliberately down-played and that of the VNAF highlighted. (This may result in an unfair apportionment of credit or praise for hazardous tasks commendably discharged, but such a shift in public appreciation would constitute a major increment of added pressure on Hanoi.)

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II. NAVAL FORCE ACTIONS

A. To the extent that resources and technical considerations permit, caulk the leaks outlined in our 22 September memorandum to General Haig entitled "Unsolicited Advice on Mining."

B. Continue and, where possible, intensify harassment of roads, railroads, waterways, etc. with offshore bombardment by naval gunfire. To the extent feasible, during the intensified pressure campaign ships should harass coastal towns and cities so that -- in conjunction with air strikes and alerts -- an undisturbed night's sleep becomes virtually impossible.

C. If technically feasible, mount occasional forays that take targets in the Haiphong area under fire by naval ships (e.g., cruisers) offshore -- this for symbolic effect and morale impact as much as for actual destruction of specific targets (which may be at least equally as well hit from the air).

D. Once the intensified naval gunfire harassment effort is clearly in train, take steps in the U.S. (augmented by carefully timed and well placed leaks) which clearly portend the recommissioning of the USS New Jersey. It should be recognized that here, as elsewhere in this program, the point is to convey a political message through use of a high-impact symbol. Whether or not a battleship with 16 inch guns is a cost effective weapons system is not the point at issue. (Indeed, if the pressure program works, it might never be necessary to actually recommission this ship.) The object of the exercise is to have the overall pressure program forcefully and unmistakably project an image of implacable inexorability, to convey to the Politburo the message that the future holds nothing but steadily tightening screws so long as it holds to its present policy of armed struggle and its present position with respect to its U.S. prisoners.

III. GROUND FORCE ACTIONS

A. U.S. Ground Forces

1. Given the necessity of convincing Hanoi that its present policies will inevitably result in the steady improvement of the GVN's political and military capabilities, it would be counterproductive to resume any form of military operations by U.S. ground forces within South Vietnam.

2. If such a review is not already in train, however, we should immediately commission (under the tightest possible secrecy controls) a careful, hard-headed, thorough and totally realistic survey of the feasibility of using U.S. troops in an airborne assault to free the bulk of the U.S. prisoners now in North Vietnamese hands. The results of such a survey might well indicate that such an operation is simply not feasible on any of

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several cogent grounds-- size of force necessary, insufficient precision of intelligence data on prison locations, unacceptable risk of causing death or injury to prisoners, etc. Such conclusions, however, should be based on carefully sifted evidence, not intuitive assumptions -- even if such intuitive assumptions are ultimately confirmed by such a review.

B. South Vietnamese Ground Force Actions

1. As soon as the Communists' current bout of main force military pressure begins to show signs of easing off, ARVN's natural tendency will be to start congratulating itself on its success. We should encourage the ARVN not to ease up its own activities but, instead, to engage in vigorous pursuit, whenever possible harassing the enemy on the ground as the Communists withdraw to their base and sanctuary areas.

2. As Thieu seems to recognize, it is particularly important that ARVN press vigorously to re-establish GVN presence in and administrative control over all populated areas, not letting up until at least this much is accomplished.

3. An ARVN raid on North Vietnamese soil would have a telling psychological impact in both North and South Vietnam -- even a raid that involved only a few hours occupation of North Vietnamese territory. The feasibility of such a project obviously requires professional military judgment and expertise to assess. To a lay civilian eye, the Baie du Brandon north of Vinh (about on the 19th parallel) might be a tempting target since there the main railroad and highway run almost at the water's edge. Also, this is

above the shunt point for Laos supplies (Vinh), above the concentration of forces attacking South Vietnam and below any concentration of forces protecting the Red River Delta.

4. Even if an actual raid is not feasible, intensive South Vietnamese Marine and ARVN practice in amphibious assault and beach landings conducted by helicopters flown off ships would unsettle the Hanoi high command.

IV. AID AND ASSISTANCE ACTIONS

A. For reasons discussed in considerable detail above, appreciable pressure would be exerted on the Lao Dong Politburo by the clear prospect of the GVN moving visibly and progressively along the road to military self-sufficiency (with the U.S. ultimately disengaged from direct participation in the struggle and assuming a support role roughly analogous to that which China and the Soviet Union play vis-a-vis North Vietnam). Generating this pressure involves actions in two areas, here termed the genuine and the cosmetic.

B. "Genuine" Actions

1. Complete the VNAF study and initiate as fast as feasible those steps which will progressively "Vietnamize" the air war in the way in which the ground war has been Vietnamized over the past four years.

2. Separately or in conjunction with 1, examine the feasibility of upgrading ARVN's resources and capabilities in armor and, especially, artillery (including 175mm guns as well as 105s and 155s). North Vietnamese forces employ artillery (of all forms, including mortars and rockets) to perform many of the support functions that air power performs for GVN (and U.S.) ground forces. The problem of Vietnamizing the air component of the struggle, hence, should also be addressed by seeing if an increase in ARVN artillery capabilities could perhaps diminish ARVN's air

support needs to some appreciable extent. (Some considerable measure of combat air support capability will almost certainly be necessary even under optimum conditions. This is not a simple substitution proposal; simply a suggestion that we see what offsets, if any, are feasible.)

3. If the results of 2's study are at all promising, try by advice, training and encouragement to wean ARVN away from its present tactical concepts and fighting style -- which have taught and encouraged our allies to rely heavily on air support -- to a style and set of concepts that places proportionately more reliance on artillery support.

C. "Cosmetic" Actions

1. With suitable publicity (some of it discreet and including calculated leaks), intensify the jet training of a symbolic group of skilled ARVN pilots. (Even a few good ones, after suitable training, might fly appropriately publicized acrobatic demonstrations in the U.S.).

2. If this is feasible (it may not be), create a symbolic ARVN jet squadron -- considering even the possibility of equipping such a squadron temporarily with F-4s -- giving attendant publicity to its existence and activities.

3. Though we should not unduly blur the focus of the division of labor image that this paper suggests be conveyed -- the South Vietnam struggle is the GVN's account, attacking the North (at least until our prisoners are returned) is a U.S. account -- it would have a high symbolic impact if a small number of qualified ARVN

pilots occasionally assisted in [] strikes for
advanced training. Any MIG kills by ARVN pilots could
be exploited with telling effect by our propaganda and
psywar outlets.

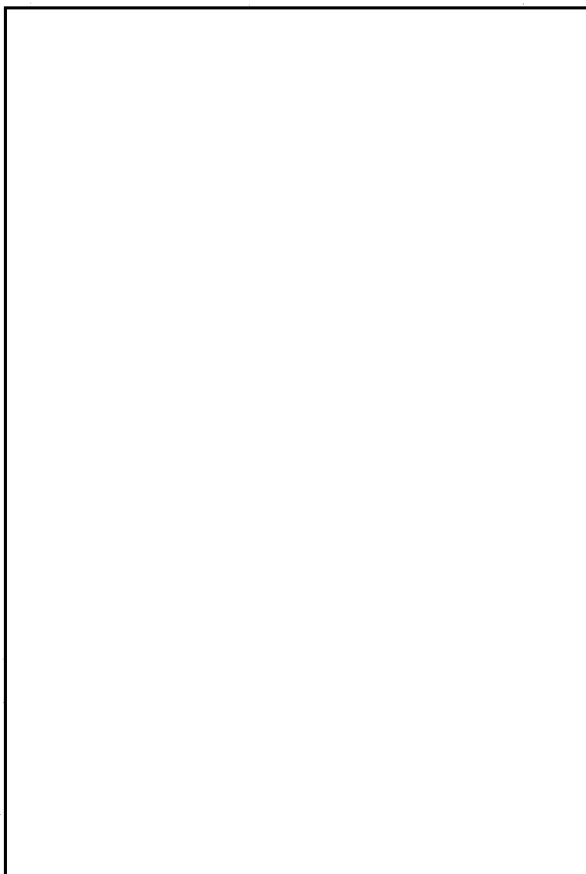
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VI. SOUTH VIETNAMESE ACTIONS

The actions suggested and outlined above (save for those involving South Vietnamese ground or air forces) have been actions that would be undertaken primarily by the U.S. Government or components thereof. In this overall intensified pressure campaign, these basically U.S. actions should be supplemented and augmented by South Vietnamese governmental action along the following lines:

A. The need for ARVN to press its advantage when main force enemy action begins to taper off and to harry the Communists as their major units pull back into base areas has already been alluded to, along with the equal need for ARVN to re-establish security protection over populated areas in which the Communists have made some inroads during their 1972 offensive (e.g., the coastal lowlands of southern MR 1 and northern MR 2 and certain trouble spots in MR 3 and MR 4). Actually, the latter should involve more than just ARVN

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operations. As soon as possible the GVN needs to undertake a vigorous campaign modeled along the lines of the very successful Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC) launched in mid-1969. The defensive tenacity of ARVN, Regional Force and even Popular Force units -- much aided by U.S. ground and air forces -- kept the enemy offensives of 1968 and 1969 from becoming Communist victories. It was the follow-on APC -- which the Communists did not expect and for which they were not prepared -- that turned Hanoi's 1968-69 big unit offensive effort into a shattering defeat from which the Viet Cong (as opposed to the NVA) have never yet really recovered. A second systematic, vigorous and relentlessly executed APC-type campaign launched after ARVN (with U.S. air and naval gunfire support) has checked the NVA could go far toward reducing the internal Communist threat within South Vietnam to permanently manageable proportions. This, in turn, would change the nature and, equally important, the internationally projected image of any future long term struggle. South Vietnam would then be well on the way to becoming what the Communists have fought so long and so desperately to prevent it from becoming: a demonstrably viable non-Communist state that can be attacked only by what cannot successfully pretend to be anything but outright invasion by the regular army of a neighboring foreign power. A vigorous APC-type program launched and run by the GVN, therefore, would put the severest kind of pressure on Hanoi, and that pressure would intensify steadily with every indication that such an APC was being successful.

B. The GVN also can and needs to take additional internal political steps described in some detail in a separate paper.

C. Finally, the GVN should take the propaganda offensive in projecting its message to North Vietnam and to the world. Thieu and his government should begin incessantly preaching the message that the GVN does not war and fights only to protect itself from foreign invasion -- pointing out that in the 2,000 odd years of the Vietnamese people's history there is no tradition or precedent for rule

from Thanh Long or, as it is now called, Hanoi over the land now known as South Vietnam.* The GVN should hammer the point that it has no quarrel with its kinsmen, the people of North Vietnam, but it will fight to the death to protect its independence from the aggressive ambitions of their tyrannical leaders. All that is necessary for peace to return to all of Vietnam and all of Indochina is for these leaders to forswear their blind ambition, or be replaced by ones willing to live in brotherhood with their southern kinsmen.

VII. REGIONAL AND DIPLOMATIC ACTIONS

A. Allied Actions

1. Given the desirability of visible movement toward a situation in which the GVN stands essentially on its own feet as an independent state receiving aid (even appreciable aid) from a friendly ally -- thus eroding to (ideally) evaporation the current patron/client image of U.S.-GVN relations -- and, simultaneously, toward a situation in which direct U.S. engagement in actual combat is focused on North Vietnam as punishment for the latter's retention of our prisoners, any further or increased involvement in the Vietnam situation by other putative GVN or U.S. allies would be counterproductive.

2. The assistance of all possible allies should be encouraged, however, to help protect the equities and image of the GVN and, even more, of Lon Nol's government as the real and only Cambodia and Souvanna's as the real and only Laos in international organizations, gatherings and conferences.

B. Regional Actions

1. Thieu's government, Lon Nol's government and Souvanna's government should take concrete, visible steps that clearly portend

*For somewhat roughly analogous reasons, there is about as much historical precedent for Hanoi rule over the Mekong delta as there is for London rule over the American west. When modern Vietnam was politically "one" (during the 19th century) the seat of imperial government was in Hue -- not Hanoi.

an evolving regional alliance in the face of North Vietnamese aggression. Building on already existing foundations, this could and should encompass economic aid (e.g., providing rice to areas in which there is a temporary scarcity), South Vietnamese training of Cambodian and perhaps Laotian troops, the occasional use of the RVNAF to help beleaguered Cambodian or Laotian forces, the continued use of GVN troops (where possible and with stricter discipline on matters involving the local population) in Cambodia, perhaps even the rotational posting of token but symbolic ARVN units to, say, help reinforce the defenses of Pakse.

2. The Thai government should give active, public (and private) encouragement to regional cooperation between and among Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam. Here even simple but highly symbolic gestures such as providing meeting facilities in Bangkok for tripartite conferences could have significant imagistic impact.

3. The point of the above is to heighten North Vietnam's sense -- and appearance -- of increasing isolation, to make it increasingly clear that the dogged, doctrinaire pursuit of the current Hanoi leadership's aggressive policies is serving as a stimulus for the forging of increasingly strong bonds of alliance between and among all of that leadership's putative victims. It should also be made clear by deed and action that this quadrilateral cooperation among neighboring powers -- South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand -- holds the promise of economic and other benefits from which North Vietnam will be excluded until she changes her leaders and/or their policies.

C. Further Diplomatic Actions

1. Laos already has diplomatic relations with both the USSR and the PRC. These should be kept as cordial as circumstances permit.

The Lon Nol government's relations with the Soviet Union -- a source of acute embarrassment and irritation to Hanoi -- should also be kept as cordial, and as publicized, as circumstances permit. Furthermore, Lon Nol should make quiet (but not secret) overtures to Peking -- not pitched to a compromise with Sihanouk but blandly ignoring his existence as a possible obstacle.

2. The GVN should also cast out a few diplomatic lines to see if any fish are nibbling. Saigon, in short, should make its own discreet -- but discreetly publicized -- overtures (separately, of course) to Moscow and Peking, taking the tack that its quarrel is not with them but only with the blind aggressive ambition of the current Hanoi leadership whose archaic fanaticism is an antediluvian anachronism in these evolving times, an anachronism that is causing everyone -- Moscow and Peking included -- unwanted and unnecessary problems. Any Saigon overtures to Moscow and Peking, plus any Lon Nol overtures to Peking, will probably be rebuffed (though it should be remembered that on 8 May the prospects for the Moscow Summit were rated near zero and in early 1971 talk of President Nixon's visiting Peking would have sounded lunatic). Nonetheless, the very act of the GVN's (and Lon Nol's) making such overtures would enhance its (his) international image and, simultaneously, be very discomfiting to Hanoi -- whose congenitally suspicious leaders, especially in light of the startling diplomatic developments of the past twelve months, will not be absolutely certain (no matter what public or private assurances they receive) that Saigon's or Phnom Penh's overtures were entirely rebuffed.* Furthermore, should Moscow and/or Peking want to exert a little pressure on

*If so desired, we could sprinkle a little fertilizer on these nagging seeds of doubt.

Hanoi for their own reasons, any such overtures from Phnom Penh and Saigon would provide a windfall opportunity.

VIII. U.S. NEGOTIATING ACTIONS

A. The whole intensified pressure campaign outlined above should be capped and reinforced by appropriate U.S. tactics at the negotiating table, and -- especially -- in any private negotiating sessions outside the quasi-public Paris forum. The line likely to have maximum impact would be one that conveyed by direct statement or clear implication that the longer Hanoi delayed in coming to reasonable terms on political settlement and satisfactory terms on the prisoner question, the more trends already in train would evolve to the detriment of Hanoi's position, prospects and long term interests.

B. This message and the trends to which it relates should be reinforced over time by a subtle but perceptible and inexorable "Vietnamizing" of the negotiations. In the Paris forum, progressively more questions should be referred to the GVN delegate as the only one able to answer them. In private talks there should be a matching line that highlights diminishing direct U.S. involvement in the South Vietnamese phase of the struggle and, hence, an (allegedly) diminishing degree of possible U.S. influence on the South Vietnamese government's policies or actions. At an appropriate point in time, we could start playing the theme (pianissimo gradually increasing to forte) that our influence over Saigon's policies is about on a par with Moscow's and Peking's over Hanoi's. The implication should become increasingly clear that Hanoi will soon have to conduct all its discussions on Vietnam or Indochina issues with Saigon, but we will keep North Vietnam's industry and economic infrastructure levelled, her ports closed, and her roads, railroads and inland waterways under constant interdiction until we get our prisoners all back and all of our MIAs accounted for.

C. Finally, there is one more piece of Vietnamese history that at some point it might be profitable to play with. Le Duc Tho used to be Le Duan's deputy

(in the early 1950s), when Le Duan was running the Nambo (Southern Region) committee and organizing the forerunner of COSVN. During this era, Le Duc Tho and Le Duan had a bitter quarrel which Ho Chi Minh himself had to settle and whose upshot was Le Duc Tho's recall to Viet Minh/Party headquarters in the Viet Bac (North Vietnam's mountainous northwest region). The circumstances of this quarrel are still obscure, but the weight of available evidence strongly suggests it was a dispute over proper policies with respect to front groups -- i.e., over how best to wage a political struggle. Le Duc Tho, in short, may not be entirely immune to quiet barbs -- or probes -- relating to Le Duan's blind rigidity or inability to grasp the new realities of a changing situation.